

DAVID AT ZIKLAG

STORY BY THE "HIGHWAY AND BYWAY" PREACHER

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Scripture Authority:—I. Samuel, chapters 27-30.

SERMONETTE.

"And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him."—A dark day for David. Troubles seemed to be descending upon him in such a flood as to utterly annihilate him. But the distress and danger of that day was to drive him to God and to keep him from the scene of the terrible tragedy which was being enacted in Israel in the defeat and death of King Saul and his sons. The day before, at the earnest solicitation of Achish, the Philistine king to whom David had sworn allegiance, he and his men had gone forth with the army of the Philistines to wage war upon the nation of Israel. Imagine the predicament into which David was plunged. He dare not refuse to go, and yet with what awful misgivings he must have gone forth, undoubtedly praying to God every step of the way that he would save him from his predicament. And so the Lord did, for the suspicions of the Philistine lords was aroused and they insisted that David and his men be sent back. And that morning they had departed for Ziklag, the city where the women and the children and all the substance which belonged to David and his men, had been left. But imagine the awful anguish with which they came upon the blackened ruins of their city, and found that every living soul and all the substance had been carried off.

Now it was that the army turned upon David with all manner of accusations. Here was the curse which had fallen upon them for presuming to go out and fight against their brethren in Israel. Here was the judgment of God for making alliance with a Philistine king. And they would have stoned David, but in his distress he turns to his God, and there he finds the grace and strength to withstand the angry forces of his men. And the Lord directed that the pursuit of the marauding band be taken up.

Thus was David taken away from the scene of the conflict which was being at that very moment waged between the Philistines and the Israelites. Who knows but what if this calamity had not fallen upon him he would have been tempted to have plunged into the battle in defense of his countrymen? And so during that trying period, God provided a task for his hands which took him away from the scene of the conflict.

THE STORY.

NEVER before had David met such a trying situation. His soul was vexed within him until it almost seemed as though he would go mad. Here had come the appeal, or rather order from Achish, the Philistine king, who had befriended him in his hour of need and had given him Ziklag as a possession, asking that David and his men join him in an expedition against Israel. And what could he do? He

dare not refuse—He dare not fight against his own countrymen. But what could he do? and he lifted his eyes to the heavens, bright with their myriad stars, and a groan escaped from his anguished soul. He was sitting alone in the darkness striving to find some way out of his dilemma. On the morrow they were to go forth, and he had given his promise to Achish that he would stand with him, but he had not dared to tell his men as yet, for he feared that they would not receive the commission kindly.

He recalled with troubled conscience how a few months before, when he had gone out and destroyed the Geshurites and the Amalekites to south of Judah, that he had deceived Achish, making him believe that it was against his own countrymen he had fought and that he had thus forever separated himself from them. And now Achish was going to prove his loyalty to him. All night long David struggled with the problem, but with the coming of the morning light he was as much as ever in the dark as to the course to pursue, and so he did the only thing any man could do under the circumstances, called his men together and prepared them to go forward with Achish and his men.

"But we will leave some of the men to guard Ziklag during our absence?" questioned one of the leaders under David.

"No," responded David, "we shall have need of all our men this day."

And so, in obedience to the command of their leader, David's men marched forth. And David said within his heart, as he grimly marched on and on towards his own beloved land:

"God will provide a way of escape. Surely, he will not suffer my hand to be lifted against my brethren and against the Lord's anointed. Surely when my hand has been stayed from taking the life of my enemy heretofore, it will not fall now as the ally of these ungodly Philistines."

The day wore on and at Aphek the armies of the Philistines went into camp, while in the distance could be seen the hosts of Israel preparing the battle front. How David's heart smote him as he looked upon the scene, and how an agony of prayer rose to God for help. His meditation was interrupted by the coming of Achish, who appeared greatly troubled, and with many words of apology and assurances as to his faith in David's integrity, he told David of the dissatisfaction of the Philistine lords at the presence of David and his men, and asked that they depart and return to Ziklag.

David was too wily to reveal his true state of mind to Achish, and he left the latter to believe that he felt deeply grieved that he was not permitted to serve with the Philistine army, but as he and his men took up the return march the next morning it was with lighter heart than he had had as he had come thither. Lighter heart? Yes. But there was the deep anxiety he felt as to the fate of his brethren in Israel. How would the battle go? He was almost tempted to yield to the muttered suggestion of some of his men that they return and cast their lot with the army of Israel. But the wisdom of such a course did not seem clear to him and so he continued the march towards Ziklag.

The exclamation of one of his men caused him to look up.

"Smoke in the distance!"

What could it mean? With cries of apprehension the men pressed forward with quickened steps and soon came upon the smouldering ruins of the city which they had left in such seeming security the day before.

After the first outburst of anguish, for every man mourned the loss of loved ones, they turned upon David with savage reproaches. See what he had brought upon them. Had they not counseled that part of the men be left behind? This was the judgment of God against them for having presumed to go out against their brethren.

And was not David responsible for it all? The angry storm grew, until some of the more violent actually took up stones to hurl at their leader.

It was then that the splendid and heroic character of David stood forth. "Stone me if you must," he cried, facing them without a tremor. "God knows that the intention of my heart was right. I have suffered with you. In this hour of need, let us not fight each other. Rather let us look to God. He will guide us."

The hands which held the stones so menacingly above his head were lowered and Abiathar, the priest, seizing the opportunity came forward with the ephod and inquiry was made of the Lord, and the Lord answered David and told him that he should pursue after the Amalekites and recover all.

The taking up of the pursuit of those who had burned Ziklag abruptly ended all talk of going up to the aid of the armies of Israel, and David found a welcome relief from his anxious, troubled thoughts in the swift, hard journey. In accordance with the word of the Lord, their expedition was favored with complete success, and the next day found them all back at Ziklag—wives, children and possessions, together with much spoil which they had taken from their enemies.

As David sat before his tent door that night he could not help but contrast his feelings with those which had filled his heart only a few nights before when he had given his promise to go out and fight with the armies of the Philistines against Israel.

"And now, instead, I have rich spoil with which to send my brethren an offering," he exclaimed. "How wonderfully God has wrought good out of seeming evil. How wonderfully he has delivered his servant from a snare that would have swallowed him up utterly. But I wonder how went the battle?" and he arose and called his servant and sent him to seek tidings. But it was not until the second day after that behold a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes rent and earth upon his head, and said:

"Saul and his sons are dead. See here is the crown and bracelet from off the king's head and arm."

Then David took hold of his clothes and rent them, and likewise all the men that were with him, and they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan, his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword.

Novel Philanthropy.

It is in the fitness of things that Scotland, the home of many notable philanthropists, should provide us with a novel method in the distribution of one's bounty. A well-known Paisley manufacturer, Mr. James Coates, has established in recent years in numerous villages throughout the Highlands and Islands small but useful libraries, which are supplemented periodically with fresh donations of up-to-date literature. Mr. Coates' generosity, however, is extended in still more novel fashion by sending a skilled oculist to travel throughout the Highlands, testing the eyes of those with defective and failing sight, and furnishing them with spectacles free of cost. In one district, that of West Sutherlandshire, no fewer than 500 pairs of spectacles were thus distributed recently.—Westminster Gazette.

New Truth.

New truth when it comes into the world has a stormy welcome, for most part. The old, foolish world, it will not learn that Divine Truth comes out of Heaven, and must and will by eternal law rule here on earth: admit the new Truth, it is as sunlight, blessed, fruitful for all; resist the new truth, it has to become as lightning, and reduce all to ashes before the blessedness can arrive.—Thomas Carlyle.

Waiting on God is giving our confidence time-exposure.



EMILY'S SUMMER FRIEND.

She Was Ragged, But She Knew the Birds and Flowers and Trees.

"If you are really anxious to get away, pet, suppose you go alone to Spencer's, and we'll be there in a few days."

So Emily went and Mr. Spencer met her at the station with a carriage. Just before they reached the home of the Spencers they passed by an old shaky-looking barn that seemed to be kept from falling only by stout poles propped against the outside.

"Who owns this wretched place?" asked Emily with interest.

"We call him 'Peter Tumbledown,'" answered Mr. Spencer; "and that old house over there is where he and his little girl lives."

The house looked as badly in need of repairs as the barn. As she looked Emily saw a little girl of about her own age, with a mass of tangled hair and a very tattered dress.

Mrs. Spencer welcomed Emily cordially, and she felt at home from the very first.

Near by was a beautiful lake with a tiny island right in the center of it. One day Emily ventured into a boat



A Friend in Need.

that lay by the shore and paddled out to the island.

Lying down to rest for a few moments she fell asleep, and it was late in the afternoon when she awoke.

You can imagine how frightened she was when she found that the boat had gone adrift and that there was no way of getting back to shore.

While she was wondering what to do, she saw approaching her another boat, and in it the ragged girl of "Tumbledown Cottage."

"If you don't mind coming into my boat," said she shyly, when quite near, "I can take you to land."

"I'd be glad to," gratefully replied Emily, "and I'm much obliged to you for your trouble."

Emily soon learned that the little girl's name was Ally, that she never went to school, and that her dog, Gyp, was all she ever had to play with.

Ally really wasn't so bad once you knew her, and, too, you could not but pity her.

Emily thanked her again as she left for home, and they parted quite friendly.

Mr. and Mrs. Graham came the next day, so she had no chance to see Ally for some time. After that, however, they met often, and Emily soon found that although Ally had not been to school, there was nothing in the country that she and Gyp did not know.

Mr. Graham believes that Emily learned more from Ally about growing things than she ever learned in school.

Emily thinks so, too, and she has learned, besides, that though a little girl may be ragged, she may still be worth while having for a friend.—Detroit Free Press.

That when you meet a friend and say to her, "How poorly you are looking!" it is by no means paying her a compliment?

He's Handy to Have.

"That artist has such a queer look, even for an artist," said her girl friend, "that I can't see how you can make up your mind to go out with him."

"Well, you see," she explained, "he is interesting. He is really bright, and they are scarce, you know, really bright people. Besides which he has taken to making sure enough bunches of money lately, which is even more strange when you think that he is an artist. Not only that, but he shows a laudable desire to spend some of it on me, which is more than praiseworthy, so I take him to the cafe where they put strangers together at the same table in the hope that my friends can't tell whether I am with him or not."

A Study in Anatomy.

Sadie was 11 and Alice was seven. At luncheon Sadie said:

"I wonder what part of an animal a chop is. Is it a leg?"

"Of course not," replied Alice; "it's the jawbone. Haven't you ever heard of animals licking their chops?"

EGGS THAT JUMP.

A Trick Which Will Entertain and Amuse Your Friends.

Your friends will be mystified completely if you do this trick very carefully.

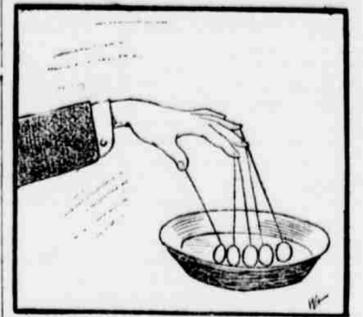
Take a number of eggs; remove the yolks and whites, so that only the shells remain.

To each of these shells paste one end of a strand of fine silk, attach the other end to one of your fingers.

In doing the trick, cautions the Los Angeles Times, be sure that your audience are far enough away to be unable to see the silken threads.

Now say that you will be able to make the eggs leap into the air by magnetizing them with your fingers.

Of course, as you move a finger upward and downward, the shell at-



The Secret of the Trick.

tached to the other end of the strand of silk will move up and down. You can gain a pretty effect by making them dance in time to music.

TRAPPING RABBITS.

Why the Proposition of a Store-Keeper Didn't Pan Out.

"There are lots of rabbits in the woods back of the rye field, and I've got six box-traps in the barn. If you'll see to 'em every morning we'll set the traps now." This proposition made to a 14-year-old boy, says Mr. Fred Mather, the author of "Men I Have Fished With," seemed a fine proposition, and the boy instantly agreed. He was to put the captured rabbits in a bag, and the man who owned the traps was to take care of them. The boy tells the story:

"The next night was clear and crisp, and oh! how cold that morning was! The first trap was unsprung. The second actually held a rabbit. There was the game crouched in the far end. I let the trap down, and for a few moments enjoyed my triumph. I was a mighty trapper!"

"I carefully adjusted the bag over the trap, and then opened it. There was a thud in the bottom of the bag, and then a glimpse of something gray and a sound of 'Zip! zip!' and if that really was a rabbit it was gone.

"The third trap held a rabbit, and with the last failure in mind, great care was taken in arranging the bag, but somehow the same thing happened again. The next two traps were empty and the sixth was sprung.

"Remembering what Garry had said about a rabbit not biting, I put in a hand and brought the animal out some way, memory fails to record how, but it does bring back the pitiful cries that rang through the woods. But I hardened my heart and dropped the game in the bag, and started for home with my prize, in triumph not unmixed with other feelings.

"After pondering for a while on the escape of the other two rabbits, the recollection of those pitiful cries came up in full force. Then I seemed to realize that they came from a poor, terrified and harmless thing that I was taking to be killed without the excitement of the hunt.

"I peeped into the bag. Two large eyes and a trembling form were in the corner. Somehow the grip on the mouth of the bag was loosened, the bottom was turned up, and a white lump of cotton in a field of gray went bobbing off into the brush.

Flying Matches.

Little Irene, who had just moved to the country from the city of New York, was sitting on the porch with her brother Edgar. They had never seen lightning bugs before, so they were surprised when they saw several bugs flying and lighting in the air.

"They are bugs," cried Edgar.

"No, they're not," declared Irene; "they're matches in the air!"

Wanted to Talk.

Little Tommy is very talkative, and on going out to tea with his father and mother the other night he was told that he mustn't speak until somebody asked him a question. After he had sat silent for half an hour, he could not stand it any longer, and he said: "I say, papa, when are they going to begin asking me questions?"

Deception.

Two little girls walking in a field feared that a cow would attack them. "Let's go right on, and act as if we weren't afraid of her at all," said one. "But," remonstrated the other, "wouldn't that be deceiving the cow?"

THE NEW COAL-SAVER.

Just How to Make the Simple Mixture and Apply It.

The new coal-saver, invented in Altoona and now being tried in thousands of homes all over the country, is a daisy. It is bound to bring the price of anthracite mines down to two cents apiece and bankrupt about 500 barons.

You take a gallon of water.

You can take it from the pipes, from a river, a millpond, a rain barrel or the cider jug. The only thing is not to have too many dead cats in it.

Into the water put one pound of common salt and four ounces of oxalic acid and stir well. Half a day's stirring will do.

Then go down cellar and make a pile of one shovelful of hard coal and three of ashes and sprinkle on your solution and mix with a hoe.

It makes no difference whether you own the hoe or borrow it.

When the mixture is ready build up

a big fire. Use all the kindling in the house and as near half a ton of coal as you can.

When things gets red hot shovel in your coal-saving mixture. It is wet, and the fire will at once dampen down, but don't mind that. You will hear a crackling noise, and there will be a pungent smell all through the house, but if your wife has got hay fever she won't smell it.

The object is to get the mixture alight, and it will then form a solid cake and do the saving act. Don't hurry it. Keep the drafts open. Keep going down to see how it gets along. Keep poking. Keep wondering and growling.

It may take a week or two to get that mixture well to going, but time is nothing to you. You might as well be watching the furnace as to be off huckleberrying. Napoleon lost Waterloo by being in a hurry.

Take two weeks to a day, and if the thing don't light up and keep your house warm for the rest of the summer you may depend on it that you have left out the champagne and

angel's food and are alone to blame for the failure.—N. O. Picayune.

Making New Resolutions.

July is just as good a month as January in which to make new resolutions. Are we conscious of a lowering of ideals? Are we failing to discriminate wisely between things that are worthy of constancy and devotion, and their opposites? Are we caught by glitter instead of by worth? Are we careless of the seriousness of life, and even though we ourselves may not be overwhelmed by the on-rolling course of things, are we sufficiently mindful of the fate of those who may be rushing to their own destruction because they do not discriminate?

In the large majority of French hospitals nuns still have the nursing of patients. In some of the large hospitals, and even in a modern institution like the Pasteur hospital, the sisters or nuns have to do all the work, even the most menial kind. In the Paris civil hospitals the nuns have been superseded by a corps of nurses and attendants.